

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 682

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TAGS: PEPR, US, CG, AO

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH ZAIRE ON ANGOLA

REF: KINSHASA 6813

1. FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA CALLED ME IN LATE JULY 3 TO FOLLOW UP ON READ-OUT I GAVE HIM LAST WEEK ON MCHENRY-NASCIMENTO TALKS (REFTEL). HE SAID MOBUTU HAD BEEN INTERESTED IN RESULTS OF TALKS AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WE THOUGHT OF LIBERIA'S SERVING AS MEDIATOR.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, UMBA SAID CONGO WAS VIEWED WITH LESS FAVOR BECAUSE YHOMBY--WHILE HIMSELF A GOOD AND CAPABLE FRIEND-- WAS SURROUNDED BY LESS RELIABLE ELEMENTS, INCLUDING CUBANS, WHO MIGHT COMPROMISE HIS UTILITY. THERE WERE SIMILAR PROBLEMS WITH ZAMBIA: NOT ONLY DID KAUNDA HAVE A NUMBER OF INFLUENTIAL ADVISERS WHOSE TRUSTWORTHINESS WAS QUESTIONABLE, BUT THERE WAS THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF THE KATANGANS' USE OF ZAMBIAN TERRITORY FOR ATTACKS AND SUBVERSION AGAINST ZAIRE. FINALLY, UMBA INDICATED THE GOZ NO LONGER CONSIDERED NIGERIA AS A LIKELY MEDIATOR, MENTIONING THE PRESENCE OF NIGERIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ANGOLA AND "OTHER PROBLEMS".

3. I TOLD UMBA I WOULD SEEK WASHINGTON'S REACTION TO LIBERIA

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AS A POSSIBLE INTERMEDIARY, NOTING, HOWEVER, THAT TO BE USEFUL A THIRD PARTY OBVIOUSLY HAD TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO ANGOLA AS WELL AS ZAIRE. FOR PRECISELY THAT REASON I HAD HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT CONGO WAS STILL A GOOD BET. UMBA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD MY POINT, AND INDICATED THE GOZ WAS OPEN-MINDED WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE OTHER CANDIDATES. HE EXPRESSED SOME INTEREST WHEN I MENTIONED IN PASSING PORTUGAL, WHOSE RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA SEEMED TO HAVE

RECENTLY IMPROVED MEASURABLY.

4. UMBA THEN REFERRED TO ANGOLA'S CALL FOR A "RECIPROCAL GESTURE" BY THE GOZ AND SAID THAT WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS MOBUTU INTENDED TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT, THE FOCUS OF WHICH WOULD BE A RENEWED OFFER FOR A NEUTRAL PARTY TO INSPECT BASES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ANGOLAN FRONTIER, INCLUDING ALL THOSE IN ZAIRE WHICH THE GOA ALLEGED WERE BEING USED BY UNITA AND FLNA. UMBA SAID MOBUTU WOULD PROBABLY ALSO REPEAT HIS ASSURANCES THAT THE GOZ IS NOT SUPPORTING EITHER UNITA OR FLEC, RECALL THAT THE GOZ LONG AGO EXTENDED RECOGNITION TO THE LUANDA REGIME, AND REVIEW OTHER ASPECTS OF THE GOZ'S WELL-KNOWN POSITION.

5. I SAID WE HAD THE GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT NETO MIGHT THIS TIME BE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN EXPLORING WAYS TO MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION, AND THAT IT THEREFORE SEEMED USEFUL TO PURSUE THE CURRENT OPENING VIA DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND SEE WHAT MIGHT BE WORKED OUT. IT WAS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT, AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD UMBA, WE INTENDED TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH THE GOZ FOLLOWING A MORE THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE LUANDA TALKS. UMBA SAID SUCH ADDITIONAL CONSULTATIONS WOULD BE WELCOME.

6. ON A RELATED MATTER, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY UMBA SAID AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE LENGEMA WOULD SHORTLY DELIVER WRITTEN GOZ REQUESTS TO BONGO AND UN SECGEN WALDHEIM FOR THE OAU AND THE UNHCR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT OF ZAIRIAN
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REFUGEES, INCLUDING THOSE IN ANGOLA.

7. COMMENT: UMBA WAS AWARE OF NETO'S RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS, INCLUDING HIS JUNE 30 INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE, IN WHICH HE IN EFFECT THROWS THE BALL IN ZAIRE'S COURT. HENCE MOBUTU PROBABLY FEELS COMPELLED TO GO ON PUBLIC RECORD HIMSELF. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IN DOING SO HE WILL GO BEYOND REPETITION OF GOZ'S ESTABLISHED POSITION ON NORMALIZATION, ALTHOUGH NOTHING UMBA SAID INDICATED ANY MAJOR NEW INITIATIVES. I SUSPECT THAT MOBUTU'S IMMEDIATE INTEREST IS TO GAIN A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE WITH LUANDA AND THAT HE REMAINS SUSPICIOUS AND THEREFORE HESITANT TO MOVE TOO FAR TOO FAST (HIS SUGGESTION OF LIBERIA AS MEDIATOR MAY REFLECT THIS). ON THE OTHER HAND, I BELIEVE HE REMAINS REASONABLY OPEN-MINDED AND THEREFORE RECEPTIVE TO FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH US. CERTAINLY IN ANY SCENARIO THAT MAY EVENTUALLY BE DEVELOPED HE WILL STRESS THE NECESSITY OF PUSHING ALONG THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS AS WELL, SINCE HE REMAINS CONVINCED THAT IT IS REALLY THEY AND NOT NETO WHO ARE IN CONTROL OF ANGOLA'S POLICY.
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